

NASA Facts

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The U.S. Government and Unidentified Flying Objects

No branch of the United States Government is currently involved with or responsible for investigations into the possibility of alien life on other planets or for investigating Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO's). The U.S. Air Force (USAF) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) have had intermittent, independent investigations of the possibility of alien life on other planets; however, none of these has produced factual evidence that life exists on other planets, nor that UFO's are related to aliens. From 1947 to 1969, the Air Force investigated UFO's; then in 1977, NASA was asked to examine the possibility of resuming UFO investigations. After studying all of the facts available, it was determined that nothing would be gained by further investigation, since there was an absence of tangible evidence.

In October 1992, NASA was directed by Congress to begin a detailed search for artificial radio signals from other civilizations under the NASA Towards Other Planetary Systems (TOPS)/High Resolution Microwave Survey (HRMS) program (also known as the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence project). Congress directed NASA to end this project in October 1993, citing pressures on the U.S. Federal budget. The HRMS did not detect any confirmed signal before it was stopped. However, similar work will continue in a more limited manner through efforts of private groups and through academic institutions. The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute (SETI Institute) in Mountain View, California, effectively replaced the Government project, borrowing the signal processing system from NASA. The SETI Institute is a nonprofit corporation conducting research in a number of fields, including all science and technology aspects of astronomy and planetary sciences, chemical evolution, the origin of life, biological evolution, and cultural evolution.

During several space missions, NASA astronauts have reported phenomena not immediately explainable; however, in every instance NASA determined that the observations

could not be termed "abnormal" in the space environment. The 1947-1969 USAF investigations studied UFO's under Project Blue Book. The project, headquartered at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, was terminated December 17, 1969. Of the total of 12,618 sightings reported to Project Blue Book, 701 remain "unidentified."

The decision to discontinue UFO investigations was based on an evaluation of a report prepared by the University of Colorado entitled, "Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects," a review of the University of Colorado's report by the National Academy of Sciences, previous UFO studies, and Air Force experience investigating UFO reports during the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's. As a result of experience, investigations, and studies since 1948, the conclusions of Project Blue Book were: (1) no UFO reported, investigated, and evaluated by the Air Force was ever a threat to our national security; (2) there was no evidence submitted to, or discovered by, the Air Force that sightings categorized as "unidentified" represented technological developments or principles beyond the range of modern scientific knowledge; and (3) there was no evidence indicating that sightings categorized as "unidentified" were extraterrestrial vehicles.

With the termination of Project Blue Book, the USAF regulation establishing and controlling the program for investigation and analyzing UFO's was rescinded. Documentation regarding the former Project Blue Book investigation was permanently transferred to the Modern Military Branch, National Archives and Records Service, in Washington, DC 20408, and is available for public review and analysis.

Since the termination of Project Blue Book, nothing has occurred that would support a resumption of UFO investigations by the USAF or NASA. Given the current environment of steadily decreasing defense and space budgets, it is unlikely that the Air Force or NASA will become involved in this type of costly project in the foreseeable future.

Since neither NASA nor the Air Force is engaged in day-to-day UFO research, neither one reviews UFO-related articles intended for publication, evaluates UFO-type spacecraft drawings, or accepts accounts of UFO sightings or applications for employment in the field of aerial phenomena investigation.

UFO Points of Contact

1. For further information on the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, please contact the SETI Institute, 2035 Landings Drive, Mountain View, CA 94043, (415) 960-4530.
2. News media requiring Project Blue Book files should contact the National Archives Public Affairs Office, (202) 501-5525. Public queries should be addressed to the Project Blue Book archivist at (202) 501-5385. For queries not related to Project Blue Book, contact the National Archives receptionist at (202) 501-5400. Documentation is available from: Modern Military Branch, National Archives and Records Service, Eighth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20408.
3. The Air Force publication, "The Roswell Report: Fact vs. Fiction in the New Mexico Desert," a lengthy document providing all the details available from the Air Force on the Roswell incident, is available for \$52 from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop: SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-9328.
4. There are a number of universities and professional scientific organizations that have considered UFO phenomena during periodic meetings and seminars. A list of private organizations interested in aerial phenomena may be found in *Gale's Encyclopedia of Associations*.
5. Persons wishing to report UFO sightings are advised to contact law enforcement agencies.